

Innovative Path and Development of Integrating Red Culture into Daily Ideological and Political Education of College Students

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Abstract

As the spiritual crystallization of the Communist Party of China's arduous yet glorious struggle, red culture contains abundant elements for ideological and political education. In the context of ideological and political education in universities during the new era, red culture remains constrained in integrating into daily education as a crucial resource for cultivating students' ideals and beliefs and strengthening value recognition. Based on the practical case of a research team at Sichuan Agricultural University, this paper proposes innovative approaches through three dimensions: theoretical soul-casting, practical empowerment, and Party-building leadership. The aim is to promote systematic, regularized, and comprehensive educational functions of red culture in higher education institutions, providing theoretical support and practical experience for high-quality development of ideological and political work in the new era. This effort also aims to offer solid talent guarantees and spiritual impetus for realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

Keywords

red culture, ideological and political education, social practice

1. Introduction

The 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China explicitly pointed out: "Carry forward the spiritual lineage of Communists represented by the great founding spirit of the Party, make good use of red resources, deeply promote the publicity and education of socialist core values, deepen education in patriotism, collectivism, and socialism, and strive to cultivate a new generation of young people who can shoulder the great mission of national rejuvenation." (Xi, 2022) In the context of the new era, university students, as the backbone of the country's future development, have their value orientations, political literacy, and spiritual demeanor directly related to the advancement of the great cause of national rejuvenation. At present, traditional ideological and political education models suffer from one-way indoctrination and disconnection between theory and practice. Universities generally face prominent issues in red cultural education, such as single-form activities, detachment from students' daily lives, and fragmented educational content, leading to the dilemma of "difficulty in entering the mind, even harder to touch the heart" when integrating red culture into daily ideological and political education. Breaking through these dilemmas and effectively embedding red culture into university students' daily ideological and political education to form a sustainable educational mechanism is an important topic that urgently requires in-depth exploration.

2. The Intrinsic Requirements for Integrating Red Culture into University Students' Daily Ideological and Political Education

Red culture, as the spiritual crystallization of the arduous yet glorious struggle of the Communist Party of China, contains rich elements for ideological and political education (Hu, 2025). The ideals, beliefs, pioneering spirit, and value orientations embodied in red culture are not only the spiritual pillar for the continuous development and strengthening of the Party and the country but also an important foundation for ideological and political education in universities in the new era. Effectively transforming red cultural resources into “living textbooks” for ideological and political education, enabling them to exert a subtle educational influence in university students' daily learning and life, is both a necessity for implementing the fundamental task of fostering morality and an inevitable requirement for cultivating a new generation of young people who can shoulder the great mission of national rejuvenation.

2.1 Theoretical Logic: The Intrinsic Compatibility between Red Culture and University Students' Ideological and Political Education

Red culture is the aggregate of spiritual wealth gradually accumulated and developed by the Communist Party of China through long-term practices in revolution, construction, and reform, encompassing core elements such as revolutionary theories, historical events, heroic figures, and spiritual lineages. The value core it contains, “patriotism, collectivism, and socialism”, is highly aligned with the fundamental goal of “fostering morality” pursued by university ideological and political education.

2.1.1 Consistency in Value Orientation

Rooted in Marxist theory, red culture emphasizes the historical mission of “seeking happiness for the Chinese people and rejuvenation for the Chinese nation,”(Xi, 2025) with a focus on cultivating ideals, beliefs, and social responsibilities. Whether it is the sacrificial spirit of risking lives for national independence during the revolutionary period, the pioneering spirit of overcoming difficulties for national industrialization in the construction era, or the innovative spirit of striving for scientific and technological self-reliance in the new era, red culture consistently revolves around this core mission, jointly pointing toward the “people-centered development philosophy” and the “great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.” The core task of university students' ideological and political education is precisely to guide young people to establish correct worldviews, outlooks on life, and values, integrating personal ideals into the great journey of national development and national rejuvenation. On the fundamental issues of “what kind of people to cultivate, how to cultivate them, and for whom,” the two form a deep resonance in value orientation.

2.1.2 Complementarity in Educational Content

Traditional ideological and political education primarily focuses on theoretical teaching, emphasizing systematic elaboration of basic principles of Marxism and the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics. However, its content often leans toward abstraction and macro-level perspectives, easily creating a sense of distance in students' understanding. Relying on historical facts, red culture transforms abstract theories into vivid and lively spiritual symbols and value images through concrete narratives such as revolutionary stories and heroic deeds, thereby effectively compensating for the “abstraction” deficiency in pure theoretical teaching. This helps university students deepen their understanding and acceptance of ideological and political theories, enhancing their interest and sense of identification in learning.

2.1.3 Synergy in Educational Approaches

University ideological and political education follows the law of “knowledge, emotion, intention, and action” in fostering people, emphasizing the unity of theoretical recognition at the cognitive level, value resonance at the emotional level, firm beliefs at the volitional level, and practical transformation at the behavioral level. With its unique historical depth and spiritual vitality, red culture aligns with this law across multiple dimensions of emotion, experience, and practice. In the emotional dimension, heroic deeds and historical scenes in red culture can evoke emotional resonance among university students, achieving value guidance through “moving with emotion”; in the experiential dimension, activities such as visits to red sites and research-based learning on revolutionary spirits allow students to immersively experience red spirit, breaking through the spatiotemporal limitations of traditional classrooms; in the practical dimension, themed voluntary

services and red story lectures on red culture can guide university students to transform theoretical cognition into concrete actions.

2.2 Practical Significance: The Inevitable Choice for Addressing Current Dilemmas in University Students' Ideological and Political Education

Currently, university students' ideological and political education faces multiple challenges. On one hand, the fragmented dissemination methods in the information era reduce university students' willingness to accept systematic theories, making it difficult for traditional classroom lecturing models to capture students' attention; on the other hand, some students exhibit tendencies toward historical nihilism, with vague recognition of red history and weakened identification with red spirit. Therefore, integrating red culture into university students' daily ideological and political education holds significant practical importance.

First, it helps enhance the appeal and emotional impact of ideological and political education. University students are in a critical stage of value shaping and personality development, where their physiological and psychological development rhythms are not fully coordinated—psychological immaturity is more prominent compared to gradual physical maturity. They think quickly, have distinct personalities, and their value orientations are not yet fixed, thus possessing strong malleability. At the same time, in the context of rapid network development and highly complex information, the channels through which university students access information are increasingly diverse, with the scope and speed of content acquisition far exceeding the past. However, without systematic guidance and scientific discernment, it is easy to cause cognitive biases, even leading to misconceptions in historical cognition and value judgments. Under these realistic conditions, introducing red cultural resources and integrating them into ideological and political education helps enhance the appeal and emotional impact of ideological and political education, thereby assisting university students in forming rational cognition and correct values in a diverse information environment.

Second, it helps strengthen university students' ideals, beliefs, and sense of national responsibility. The firmness of ideals and beliefs cannot be separated from the guidance of scientific theories. (Zhang and Wang, 2025) As a “living textbook,” red culture, as an important carrier of the century-old Party history, condenses rich theoretical resources and spiritual wealth, possessing irreplaceable functions in helping young students establish lofty communist ideals and practice socialist core values. At the same time, red culture also plays an important role in resisting the infiltration of historical nihilism and enhancing political identification. Contemporary university students have received political identification education since childhood, with overall high levels of identification. However, in the context of global value diversification and offensive public opinion from external hostile forces, some youth experience wavering in institutional confidence and historical cognition, with cyberspace becoming a breeding ground for nihilistic rhetoric. Every story and historical segment in red culture is imbued with profound patriotic sentiments (Ma and Ke, 2024). Red culture authentically records the great journey of the Communist Party of China leading the people to achieve national independence, realize socialist construction, promote reform and opening up, and establish the socialist market economic system, providing a solid basis for clarifying origins, responding to doubts, and dispelling misunderstandings. Through systematic learning and guidance, young groups can establish correct historical views, further consolidating political identification with the Party's leadership and the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

Finally, it helps achieve the all-round educational function of the “Great Ideological and Political Course.” General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out: “Ideological and political courses should not only be taught in classrooms but also in social life.” “We must make good use of the ‘Great Ideological and Political Course’ and certainly combine it with reality.” (Du, 2021) As an educational resource with profound historical heritage and value-leading role, red culture can become an important lever for extending the “Great Ideological and Political Course” beyond campus. Currently, university student groups face impacts from diverse values, and ideological and political education within classrooms often suffers from abstraction and conceptualization limitations. Red culture can guide students to understand historical missions and identify social responsibilities in real scenarios, transforming theoretical knowledge into concrete behaviors through actual actions. Through diverse forms such as social practice, voluntary services, visits to red education bases, and campus cultural activities, red culture not only generates emotional resonance at the sensory level but also internalizes into value identification and conscious behavior through experiences and actions.

3. Practical Dilemmas in Integrating Red Culture into University Students' Daily Ideological and Political Education—Analysis Based on Actual Cases

In the context of ideological and political education in universities in the new era, red culture, as an important resource for cultivating university students' ideals and beliefs and strengthening value identification, still faces certain practical dilemmas in its integration into daily education. For example, the “Devotedly Passing on the Red Spirit, Inheriting the Heart's Continuity” (*Jing Xin Chuan Hong, Xin Mai Xiang Cheng*) Practice Team from the School of Economics at Sichuan Agricultural University (hereinafter referred to as the Practice Team) achieved positive results in guiding students' ideological identification and enhancing practical experiences through the “Sichuan-Shaanxi-Gansu Red Culture Immersion Practice” conducted during the 2025 summer vacation. However, overall, there are still evident shortcomings in incorporating red culture into daily ideological and political education.

3.1 Single Educational Carriers, Failing to Meet University Students' Diverse Needs

Currently, the carriers for integrating red culture into university students' ideological and political education are mainly “classroom lectures,” “themed lectures,” and “visits to red memorial halls,” with forms that are relatively singular, lacking innovation and interactivity. Although the Practice Team broke through the limitations of traditional carriers through methods such as picture book teaching and red song singing, from the perspective of overall university practices, most red education activities remain at the level of passive reception. For instance, when organizing university students to visit red scenic spots, activities often focus on “listening to explanations and viewing exhibits,” lacking elements that allow students to actively participate and deeply experience. The singular forms result in red culture failing to truly integrate into university students' daily lives, significantly undermining the educational effects.

3.2 Superficial Practical Experiences, Insufficient Transformation of Red Spirit

The educational value of red culture lies not only in cognitive-level understanding but also in practical-level transformation. Currently, many universities' red practice activities suffer from “superficiality” issues. On one hand, practice activities lack systematic design, often being short-term and fragmented, such as weekend one-day tours to red scenic spots or short-term summer practices, making it difficult for university students to deeply feel the connotations of red culture; on the other hand, practice activities are disconnected from students' professional learning and growth needs. For example, some red practices merely stop at check-in photos and writing practice reports, failing to integrate red spirit with university students' professional skill development and social responsibility.

3.3 Weakened Leadership from Party Building, Imperfect Collaborative Education Mechanisms

University Party building work serves as an important leading force in ideological and political education. As one of the core contents of Party building work, the integration of red culture into university students' ideological and political education requires overall coordination and deep involvement from Party building efforts. However, the leading role of Party building in integrating red culture into ideological and political education is currently not fully realized. Red-themed activities organized by Party branches are mostly targeted at Party members and fail to cover all university students, and the activity forms lack connection with ideological and political education courses. For example, when the Practice Team cooperated with communities and rural primary schools, it achieved preliminary resource docking, but how to establish long-term stable cooperation mechanisms and how to integrate practice activities with the school's Party building work and ideological and political course system still require further improvement.

4. Innovative Pathways for Integrating Red Culture into University Students' Daily Ideological and Political Education

In response to the aforementioned dilemmas, drawing on the insights from the Practice Team's experiences, this paper proposes innovative pathways for integrating red culture into university students' daily ideological

and political education, aiming to build an all-encompassing, multi-layered, and three-dimensional integration system.

4.1 Theoretical Soul-Forging: Constructing a Linked Intra- and Extra-Campus Red Culture Immersion System

Theoretical teaching serves as the foundation for integrating red culture into ideological and political education, requiring a breakthrough from the limitations of traditional classrooms to build an immersion system with “classroom teaching as the mainstay and campus culture as a supplement,” achieving red culture’s “entry into ears and minds.”

4.1.1 Deepening the Integration of Ideological and Political Courses with Red Culture

In compulsory ideological and political courses such as “Ideological and Moral Cultivation and Legal Foundations” and “Outline of Modern Chinese History,” establish “red culture thematic modules,” combining historical events like the Lugou Bridge Incident, the Long March, and the War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea to deeply explain the underlying red spirit; integrate revolutionary family traditions and integrity stories of revolutionary financial workers to conduct red education. Universities can develop school-based red culture courses tailored to their own characteristics, achieving organic integration of red culture with professional education.

4.1.2 Creating Campus Red Culture Scenarios

Incorporate red culture into campus environment construction, such as establishing red culture corridors on campus to display revolutionary heroic deeds and red spirit lineages; in public spaces like libraries and teaching buildings, set up red book corners and red film screening areas to provide convenient red culture learning resources for university students. Additionally, organize “red culture theme months” activities through forms such as red film screenings, red drama performances, and red story sharing sessions to create a campus atmosphere of “red everywhere, influenced at all times,” allowing red culture to naturally integrate into university students’ daily lives.

4.2 Practical Empowerment: Developing Branded and Professionally Integrated Red Practice Education Projects

As an important component of university ideological and political course teaching, practical teaching supplements and deepens classroom teaching. In integrating red culture into university ideological and political course teaching, a practice-oriented approach should be emphasized (Wang, 2025). It is necessary to create influential characteristic projects that students are willing to participate in and can sustain long-term, while designing activities closer to students’ learning and growth needs based on the characteristics of different majors. Deeply excavating and organizing red culture resources, and building and utilizing red culture practice teaching bases well, is the prerequisite for effectively integrating red culture resources into ideological and political course practical teaching (Li and Wang, 2023).

4.2.1 Developing Branded Red Practice Projects

Around the theme of red culture inheritance, construct long-term, stable, and distinctive practice brands. University students can be organized during summer vacations to delve into red revolutionary old areas, conducting activities such as bringing red classrooms to communities and campuses, red historical surveys, and red spirit lectures; at the same time, create red research-based learning journeys, establishing collaborations with local red venues and revolutionary old areas to design characteristic projects like Long March route research trips and War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea historical research trips, enabling university students to deepen their understanding of red culture through on-site experiences.

4.2.2 Promoting Deep Integration of Red Practice with Professional Learning

Based on the characteristics of different majors, design red practice activities closely integrated with majors. Economics majors can conduct surveys on revolutionary financial history, researching financial policies and practices in various revolutionary base areas and exploring the implications of red financial culture for modern financial development; education majors can engage in red education course design, developing school-based

red culture courses for rural schools; arts majors can undertake red culture creative design, presenting red history and spirit through forms such as painting, music, and drama... Through the organic integration of majors and practice, university students can not only enhance their professional abilities but also better inherit the red spirit, providing replicable pathways for ideological and political education in universities nationwide.

4.3 Party Building Leadership: Constructing a “Party Building + Ideological and Political Education” Red Culture Integration Mechanism

Red culture is the revolutionary culture formed by the Communist Party of China in revolutionary practice and also an important cultural resource for grassroots Party organization construction (Jiang, 2019). Party building work serves as an important safeguard for integrating red culture into university students’ ideological and political education, requiring the strengthening of Party building’s leading role to construct integration mechanisms that link Party building with ideological and political education and foster interactions between Party members and students, achieving systematic and normalized penetration of red culture into ideological and political education.

4.3.1 Leveraging the Fighting Bastion Role of Party Branches

Incorporate red culture content into various Party building activities, such as organizing red-themed Party Day activities to guide Party members in visiting red venues, studying red history, and discussing red spirit; establish red culture lecture teams led by Party members to conduct lectures in classes and dormitories; form Party member red assistance groups, pairing Party members with non-Party students to jointly learn red culture and participate in practices, using Party members’ vanguard exemplary role to drive all students, enhancing the appeal and influence of red culture.

4.3.2 Promoting Synergy between Party Building, Ideological and Political Courses, and Practice Activities

University Party committees should attach great importance to the utilization and application of red culture resources, incorporating the integration of red culture resources into university ideological and political courses into the school’s educational development plans, clarifying its important position in the school’s ideological and political work (Wang, 2024). In ideological and political course construction, invite Party organization leaders and outstanding Party members to participate in teaching, sharing red stories and practical experiences; form practice teams with Party branches as units, led by Party members to guide students in activities; establish a collaborative assessment mechanism for Party building and ideological and political education, incorporating red culture inheritance outcomes into Party branch assessments, Party member evaluations, and ideological and political education evaluation systems to ensure that the integration of red culture into educational work is implemented and exerts sustained effects.

5. Conclusion

This paper, grounded in the practical needs of high-quality development in ideological and political education in universities in the new era, takes the activation and inheritance of red culture as its core topic. Drawing on the specific case of the “Devotedly Passing on the Red Spirit, Inheriting the Heart's Continuity” Summer Social Practice Team from the School of Economics at Sichuan Agricultural University, it systematically reviews the integration logic between red culture and university students’ daily ideological and political education, analyzes practical dilemmas, and constructs targeted innovative pathways, providing an operable practical framework for the normalized integration of red culture into university ideological and political education.

The innovations of this study are mainly reflected in two aspects: first, innovation in research perspective, breaking through the previous tendency in red culture integration studies to “emphasize macro theory while neglecting micro practice,” using a single university practice team as a micro entry point, and following a logical chain of “case dissection - problem extraction - path derivation” to make research conclusions more practically applicable; second, innovation in mechanism design, for the first time incorporating “Party building leadership” and “professional adaptation” into the red culture education system, proposing a linkage model of “Party branches + practice teams + professional characteristics,” which not only addresses the issue of

incomplete coverage in red education but also avoids the drawbacks of red practices being disconnected from students' growth needs, providing a new paradigm for practical education under the perspective of the "Great Ideological and Political Course."

Yet limitations must still be acknowledged: from the perspective of research samples, the case focuses only on the practice team from the economics school of an agricultural university, without covering comprehensive universities, science and engineering institutions, arts colleges, or differences across eastern, central, and western regions, resulting in limited sample representativeness and necessitating further validation of the conclusions' universality; from the perspective of research methods, the evaluation of red culture's educational effectiveness relies mainly on qualitative descriptions, without constructing a quantitative evaluation index system encompassing the three dimensions of "cognition - emotion - behavior," making it difficult to precisely measure red culture's actual impact on students' value shaping. Future research can deepen in three aspects: first, expand research samples and methods by selecting universities of different types and regions for multi-case comparative studies; second, introduce "mixed research methods," combining quantitative approaches such as questionnaire surveys, in-depth interviews, and behavior tracking to build an evaluation model for red culture's educational effectiveness, enhancing the scientificity and universality of research conclusions.

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